

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-06

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 FEA-01 AF-08 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12

NEA-10 ACDA-07 AGR-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00

CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01

ERDA-05 FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 JUSE-00

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-01 OES-06 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAL-01 OIC-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 USIE-00 /154 W

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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8500

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 3105

FROM LOS DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLOS, OVIP (LEWIS, SAMUAL W), VE

SUBJECT: PUERTO RICAN CONTINENTAL SHELF ISSUE

REF: CARACAS 9287; USUN 3084

1. FURTHER TO USUN 3084 ASSISTANT SECRETARY LEWIS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT OUR RELUCTANCE FOR HIM TO BE DRAWN INTO A DISCUSSION OF THE QUESTION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF OFF PUERTO RICO, WHICH RAISES NOT ONLY COMPLICATED LOS QUESTIONS BUT ALSO DIFFICULT DOMESTIC ISSUES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND PUERTO RICO, STEMS NOT FROM OUR DESIRE TO BE HELPFUL AND UNRESPONSIVE TO THE VENEZUELANS BUT FROM OUR DISINCLINATION TO BE DRAWN INTO A DISCUSSION WITH A THIRD COUNTRY WHICH WOULD TURN UPON A RANGE OF DELICATE U.S. DOMESTIC ISSUES

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WITH PUERTO RICO.

2. DURING AMBASSADOR LEARSON'S LOS CONSULTATIONS WITH ANDRES AGUILAR AND SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE VENEZUELAN LOS DELEGATION IN CARACAS ON JULY 19, THE TRANSITIONAL PROVISION WAS DISCUSSED, AND THE VENEZUELANS AT THAT TIME EXPRESSED ENTIRE FAMILIARITY WITH THE VARIOUS ISSUES INVOLVED. AGUILAR AND DR. FALCON BRICENO STATED THAT THE PUERTO RICANS HAS RAISED THE QUESTION OF RESOURCE RIGHTS TO DEPENDENT TERRITORIES WITH THE VENEZUELAN LOS DELEGATION AT THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE LOS CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK AND HAS ASKED FOR VENEZUELA'S HELP IN PUTTING FORWARD ITS VIEWPOINT TO THE U.S. AMBASSADOR LEARSON DID NOT ENTER INTO A LENGTHY DISCUSSION OF THE TRANSITIONAL PROVISION SINCE AGUILAR AND THE OTHER VENEZUELANS PRESENT WERE THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH IT, NOR OF ITS SPECIFIC APPLICATION TO PUERTO RICO, FOR THE SAME REASON. AGUILAR CLEARLY INDICATED HIS REALIZATION THAT LOS MATTERS RAISE A NUMBER OF SENSITIVE ISSUES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND PUERTO RICO, AND DID NOT PRESS AMBASSADOR LEARSON ON THE POINT.

3. WE THEREFORE SUSPECT THAT FOREIGN MINISTER ESCOVAR WOULD RAISE THE QUESTION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF OFF PUERTO RICO MORE TO GRATIFY PUERTO RICAN THAN VENEZUELAN INTEREST IN THE MATTER. WE THERE BELIEVE IT PREFERABLE THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY LEWIS STEER CLEAR OF THIS VERY TRICKY QUESTION.

4. AMBASSADOR LEARSON'S DISCUSSIONS WITH AGUILAR WERE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LATTER'S DUTIES AS CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE II NOT AS AN OFFICIAL OF THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT.
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